



Ø BEAT



Pikes Peak Radio Amateur Association Officers and Directors

President—	Rob Roller	WB7WHT			
Vice-President—	Doug Moloney	WBØMHP	3817 Vaquero Circle S.	80918	590-2757
Secretary—	Warren Hickey	WØYNE	12896 Tia Lane	80908	495-0471
Treasurer—	Gerald Nleman	KBØSHM	6300B Elderberry Drive, USAFA	80840	
Ø-Beat Editor—	Jeff Boyes	NØJLH	2626 E. Bijou Street	80908	633-5650
Board Member—	Ron Deutch	NKØP	4305 Ridgeland Drive	80918	593-8362
Board Member—	Jeff Ryan	NØWPA	6721 Northface Lane	80919	260-6826
Board Member—	Gloria Ryan	NØZFX	6721 Northface Lane	80919	260-6826
Board Member—	Harry Russell	NØSFP	11710 Tracy Lane, Peyton	80831	749-0244

Ø-BEAT is published monthly in the interest of the members of the Pikes Peak Radio Amateur Association, Inc., PO Box 16521, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80935. For membership and subscription information see the last page of this publication. The Pikes Peak Radio Amateur Association meets monthly on the second Wednesday of each month at the Disabled American Veterans Hall, Chapter 26, 6880 Palmer Park Blvd. at 7 PM.

Deadline for submission of articles or advertisements is the 20th of each month. Submissions are accepted in any form, however electronic submission (on disk, or via the Internet) is preferred. Articles should be sent directly to the Ø-BEAT Editor. Permission is granted to reprint articles provided credit is given to both the author and this publication.

Monthly advertising rates: Full page \$48; half page \$24; quarter page \$12; business card \$6. These rates are billed quarterly. Send your advertisement requests and payments to: PPRAA, PO Box 16521, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80935.

Committee Chairpersons

Activity	Doug Moloney	590-2757
Auditing		
Historian	Al Craig	594-9288
Interference	Bill Petty	591-2116
Membership	Les Borst	634-3995
Programs	Doug Moloney	590-2757
Publicity	Al Craig	594-9288
Public Service	Mike Stansberry	636-1290
Swapfest	Harvey Hunter	597-8964
Technical Instruction	Al Bailey	597-8514
Trailer Custodian	Harry Russell	749-0244
VE Testing	Erik Mugele	596-5345
Ø-Beat Editor	Jeff Boyes	633-5650
ARES Liason	Jeff Ryan	260-6826
CCARC Liason	Cory Nelson	
RACES Liason	Bryan Curl	390-5524
Skywarn Liason	Steve Westby	570-1070

Reminder — November Meeting

The next meeting of the PPRAA will be on
Wednesday, November 15th
at the Disabled American Veterans Hall,
6880 Palmer Park Blvd.
The meeting will start at 7 PM.

Quiet! EXAM IN PROGRESS



Radio Exams

Radio exams sponsored by the PPRAA are held on the 2nd Saturday of February, April, June, August, October, and December. Testing takes place at 9 A.M. at:

Denver Technical College
225 South Union
Colorado Springs

Everyone is seated on a walk-in basis. Those wishing to take an examination should bring the following items:

1. \$5.00 (preferably a check or money order made out to ARRL/VEC) for any exam other than element 1A or 2.
2. Picture identification.
3. A copy of your current amateur radio license, and/or a copy of any examination credit you have as well as the signed original. We keep the copies.
4. A pen, pencils, and a calculator if you need one.

If you have any further questions please call Erik Mugele, KGØXE at 596-5345. Please do not call Denver Technical College.

Words from the President:

WB7 We Have Talent in this club...

Another term of board members has come to an end, and with that, another term is beginning for the new and continuing board members. Congratulations are in order for the new members: Doug Moloney, WB0MHP, is the new vice president; Gerald Neiman, KB0SHM, is the new treasurer; Gloria Ryan, N0ZFX, and Ron Deutsch, NK0P are new board members. (Ron was treasurer so although he's not really new to the board, he has a new position.) Continuing board members are Warren Hickey, WD0YNE, secretary; Jeff Boyes, N0JLH, Zero Beat editor; Jeff Ryan, N0WPA, and Harry Russell, N0SFP. Welcome, and welcome back!

I'd like to also reintroduce you to the PPRAA. For some members the PPRAA is an association where the members get together once a month to see their friends and meet some new faces. For some newer members the PPRAA is an association of amateurs that have experience in an area where the new member has an interest. For others it's an association with a diverse membership that has many different backgrounds and interests. And others see the PPRAA as providing them with a place where they can volunteer in the public service or for the good of the association, as in organizing a hamfest or a picnic. On the whole, the PPRAA is something different for you and for me.

Regardless of what it is to you, has it lived up to your expectations? Have you lived up to your goals in the PPRAA? Are you still searching for the right niche in the PPRAA where you can shine? If you haven't found that niche yet, could it be that no one has created it yet? Maybe it's time for you to step up and create it. Although there are a lot of activities going on all year round, we can always use one more volunteer to stir up some interest about another part of amateur radio. So I challenge anyone that sees a need to step up and fill that need. Think about it, then talk about it. If for some reason you would rather bring it up in a more private setting, keep in mind that any member can come to the board meetings. Either way, let's talk! Rob, WB7WHT

Attention all PPRAA members!

Are you currently storing any Association property? If so, the PPRAA property custodian, Mike Stansberry K0TER, wants to know about it. Please give Mike a list of the property you are storing, as well as condition of the equipment.

Attention all homebrewers!

Are you interested in creating a homebrewers group? If so, contact: Scott KB0SLG 579-0571 or Carlos KB0REI 632-1569



OM/YL LUNCH BUNCH

The next lunch meeting will be November 16 at the Hometown Buffet in the Shops at the Bluffs Shopping Center at 12:00 Noon.

73's

Rosie Calaway, WA0MNL
471-9965

EL PASO COUNTY ROUND TABLES

VHF Round Table - Tuesday evenings at 7:30 p.m. local time on 146.58 MHz.

HF Round Table - Sunday evenings at 7:30 p.m. local time on 3990.5 kHz.

Everyone is invited to join in the fun.

Editor's Notes

Newsletter submissions can be made (in any form) either at the meeting, by mail, or electronic mail. If you wish to send me email, call me at 633-5650 for the address.

Thanks!

Jeff Boyes N0JLH



Dits and Bits

Estate Sale (K4UBU):

Complete Heathkit Station
SB104A Transceiver, SB604 Power
Supply/Speaker, SB614 Console, SB634
Phone Patch, and SB644A VFO. Selling as
a complete set.

Also:

SB224 Linear Amp
B&W Tuner VS300A
Icom IC225 2m mobile
Kenwood TH415A HT w/DTMF (440 mHz)
Bearcat 20/20 Scanner
(2) Ringo Ranger 2m antennas
3 element Tri-Band beam
50 ft Rohn 25 Tower
Wilson rotor
Contact George WB0DUM 495-3983

For Sale:

2m glass mount antenna
440 mHz glass mount antenna
Contact George WB0DUM 495-3983

Antenna Farm For Sale, All equipment in like new condition, selling at half cost:

AEA IsoPole 2m ant w/10ft mast \$29.50
COMET FP-19 900mHz collinear vertical,
16db gain, type N connector \$49.97
LARSEN NLA-150-MM, 3db, 2m 5/8 wave
magmount ant \$29.48
LARSEN NLA-220-MM, 3db, 220mHz 5/8
wave magmount ant \$29.48
LARSEN NLA-440-MM, 5db, 450mHz 2
element magmount ant \$28.97
HUSTLER MO-3, 54" no breakover mobile
basic mast (motor home type) \$11.97
HUSTLER RM-75S 75m resonator \$24.97
HUSTLER RM-40S 40m resonator \$17.97
HUSTLER RM-20S 20m resonator \$14.47
HUSTLER SSM-2 Ball mount for above
basic mast and resonators \$13.47
HUSTLER QD-2 stainless steel "Quick
Disconnect" (Used with basic mast and ball
mount) Selling two (2) each \$9.97
SHAKESPEARE "Heliwhip" Fiberglass 10m
"helically wound" Superb ant! \$14.97
PALOMAR R-X Noise Bridge for tuning
above antenna farm! \$39.97
Contact Oak K0ROL.

General Membership Meeting Minutes October 11, 1995

The general membership meeting was opened
at 1900 hrs by the president Steve Westby upon
determining a quorum of the membership was
present. Members and guests introduced
themselves. The treasurers report was given by
Ron Deutsch, N0KP. Starting balance was
\$4277.25, income \$165.00, expenses \$322.01,
leaving a new balance of \$4120.24. The
minutes of the Sep 11, 1995 general
membership meeting were approved as
published in Ø-BEAT.

Committee Reports:

V.E Testing: Erik, KG0XE stated that there are
two VE session this month. The regular
Saturday session will be held at Denver Tech
Institute on Union Blvd and on Wednesday at
the Tesla Society.

A.R.E.S.: Jeff, N0WPA spoke about the
Simulated Emergency Test to be held on Oct
21, 1995. It will last three hours and simulation
will be based on the Limon Tomado. There will
be no call up.

Public Service: Mike, K0TER, presented
"Thank You" letters to those who participated in
"Walk America".

Interference: Bill Petty, N0NJX had nothing to
report.

CCARC: The CCARC meeting was held in
Littleton on Sep 30. Our Association was well
represented by Cory Nelson. He reported on the
trouble that the Denver repeater groups were
having on Squaw Mtn.

Ø BEAT: Jeff, N0JLH reminded everyone the
cutoff date for inputs for the Ø BEAT is the 20th
of each month.

Swapfest: Harvey, WA3EIB, has agreed to be
next years Swapfest Chairman. He briefed the
group about a recommendation by Marshall Quait
that we hold a state convention in conjunction
with our swapfest. The swapfest committee will
meet soon to begin planning.

Christmas Party will be in December. Anyone
with ideas should contact Rob Roller.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Elections: Those elected were:

President	Rob, WB7WHT
Vice President	Doug, WB0MHP
Treasurer	Gerald, KB0SHM
Secretary	Warren, W0YNE
Board member	Gloria, N0ZFX

Hammy Award was presented to Cliff, N0ZUQ. Congratulations Cliff.

A special Birthday for John, N0VBM who is 80 yrs old. We wish him another 80 years of ham radio.

Next Board meeting will be held at Rob Roller's home on Monday 16 Oct 1995 at 1900 hrs. If you plan to attend please let him know.

Respectfully submitted by Warren, W0YNE, Secretary

Board Meeting Minutes October 16, 1995

The Board Meeting held, was opened at 1900 hours by the president, Rob Roller, WB7WHT at his home. Members present were Rob, WB7WHT; Warren, W0YNE, Gerald, KB0SHM; Jeff, N0WPA; Gloria, N0ZFX, Ron, N0KP; and Doug, WB0MHP. Ron reviewed the financial status of the association.

The Board reviewed the ARRL Transition of Club Officers Guide and covered all the transition topics in detail. The appointments of the standing committee chairpersons were reaffirmed.

The board had an in-depth discussion of the monthly meeting programs. Doug had some exciting ideas that the board fully supported. These will continue to be developed in future meetings.

Being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted Warren Hickey, W0YNE.

ARRL Special Bulletin 54

Amateurs with Internet access may wish to check out the Restrictive Antenna Covenants Home Page, maintained by Don Stoner, W6TNS. It features not only information on Stoner's own battle with his condominium association in Clearwater, Florida, but also lists other resources for information of interest to radio amateurs.

Stoner's home page is at:

<http://www.hamweb.com/~sjl/STONER/ANTENNA.html>

Hamfest Calendar

Winter Superfest III

Northern Colorado Amateur Radio Club

Saturday, 13 Jan 95 at 0900-1500

(setup at 0700)

Larimer County Fairgrounds,

Railroad Ave, Loveland

General Info: Mike Robinson AA0UB 970-484-9196

Tables: Jeanene Gage N0YHY 303-351-7327

VE Exams: Trent Hays WB0HXL 303-484-8315

Admission: \$3; Tables \$8 (includes admission)

Talk-in: 145.115(-) MHz and 146.529(s)

Misc: VE testing, food and drink, computers, commercial exhibitors

Denver Radio League

Sunday, 26 Nov 95 at 0800-1400

JeffCo Fairgrounds, Golden, CO (near I-70 and CO-495)

General Info: Dale KE6ACP 303-360-5198

Admission: \$3.00; Tables: \$8.00 in advance or \$10.00 at the door. Table prices DO NOT include admission.

Talk-in: 147.33(+) NO PL or 146.520(s)

Telephone Info: 303-674-5389

Tables: Guy Reed W5GR (303)-674-5389, or Bruce Kirkpatrick KE0VR (303)-450-0076

Dayton '96 - The Dayton Hamvention starts Thursday, May 17, 1996, and runs through Sunday May 19, 1996.

EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY: All users of the 146.97 mHz repeater will be required to use a 100 Hz "PL" or continuous sub-audible tone for accessing the repeater.

Use of the 100 Hz tone is NOT a secret, and its use is NOT intended to restrict access to the repeater. It is being used to conquer noise problems.

Thanks,

Hal Bergeson, W0MXV

Pikes Peak FM Association, Board Member

[The following article was submitted for publication by John Chapman N0KIC - Ed.]

STATION GROUNDING

By Gary Coffman KE4ZV

There are three general reasons given for grounding a station.

1. Improved RF performance.
2. Elimination of stray RF in the shack.
3. Electrical safety.

Of these three reasons, only the latter has merit except under special conditions. Lets look at them one by one and see where the truth lies.

1. Improved RF performance.

This is usually a reason claimed for needing a good ground. It is actually false except with antennas that must work against ground, and even then the ground needs to be at the antenna feedpoint and not at the transmitter (unless the transmitter is the feedpoint, as can be true with some random longwire antennas). A balanced antenna, such as a dipole, yagi, quad, etc., is ground independent. It does not need a ground connection to work, and will in fact work in free space with no ground connection present at all. Many verticals, longwires, and some other asymmetric designs need to work against a ground reference. That ground reference, however, doesn't necessarily need to be a connection to Earth. A counterpoise, radials, or the like can serve just as well, or better, than an Earth connection. And that connection needs to be under the antenna, and not back at the shack.

2. Elimination of ~~stray~~ RF in the shack.

This is often a reason given for a RF ground connection to Earth. However, this is like taking aspirin for a brain tumor. It may suppress the symptoms to some extent, but it doesn't address the real underlying problem. The real underlying problem is a station design or layout fault. If the equipment has poor Faraday shielding, or if the feeder currents aren't well balanced, or if station interconnections create daisy chains or ground loops, then there will be

stray RF in the shack. Grounding one or more cabinets may actually create more circulating currents which can increase the problems of stray RF. In some cases, attachment to a good RF ground will reduce stray RF problems at some frequency, but may increase problems at another frequency. This is not the proper approach to dealing with stray RF. The preferred approach is to eliminate the cause of the stray RF.

3. Electrical safety.

This is the real reason for an effective grounding system for the shack. There are two different hazards that an effective grounding system will solve. One is ordinary electrical shock hazards. In the US, the National Electrical Code is the standard that addresses this. One of the cardinal rules of the NEC is that all ground connections must be bonded together. If you fail to do this, you can have a shock hazard between cabinets connected to different ground references. So the myth that you need to keep utility and RF grounds separate is not only false, it can be a safety hazard. (There are a couple of very specialized circumstances where the Code permits isolated grounds, but as a general rule, failing to bond all grounds together is a major Code violation.)

The second reason for an effective grounding system is for lightning mitigation. This can be a difficult problem and must be approached with care. A single mistake can be very costly. Lightning is RF, and like any other RF, downlead inductance is a primary concern in setting up a grounding system. Lightning surges also represent peak currents on the order of 8,000 amperes (with occasional so called "super bolts" going up to 200,000 amperes). These discharges only last for microseconds, so the average power is low, but the peak power is intense. It only takes a slight amount of inductance in a downlead to generate a potential difference of tens of thousands of volts between one end and the other. If these potentials are allowed to express themselves between equipment cabinets, devastating damage can occur to sensitive electronic components.

There are two concepts you must apply to your station ground system as your first lines of defense against these potentials occurring across your equipment. The first concept is that of a single point ground, and the second is called ground window technique.

Single point grounding is simple in concept, but often subtle in execution. Basically, all connections to Earth must be interconnected at a single common point, and all connections from equipment that needs a ground termination must run to that single point and to no other connection with Earth. Daisy chained connections are strictly prohibited. Every connection to the single point must be straight and direct from the equipment requiring the ground connection. Ground "busses" are a serious no-no despite their being touted in amateur literature. They form instant ground loops for the equipment, and at the high currents present in a lightning discharge, they can cause thousands of volts to express themselves across the various cabinets connected to the "ground" buss. Don't do this.

The idea here is that because everything is forced to a single potential, that of the single point, whatever it is, no current can flow through the equipment. Zero potential difference results in zero current flow. It's those damaging currents you are trying to control. You don't want the path to ground to be through any of your equipment. Rather, you want the path to ground to be through the single point, and only through the single point. Note well that "ground" is not zero volts, and will not be zero volts in any sense except a relative one during equipment operation or during a lightning strike. This doesn't matter if your layout topology is correct. All "ground" is supposed to be is a common potential for everything in the system to reference against. Use of a single point connection enforces this single common potential, whatever it may be at any given instant.

When you start thinking about the many "ground" potential interconnections in your station, achieving a true single point ground system seems a daunting task. This is where the related idea of a ground window

can help. The purpose of the ground window is to short out any possible ground loops in your system at the station entry point.

A ground window is simple in concept, and simple in execution. Basically, it is a physically small conductive plate through which every cable that enters or leaves your station must pass. Every cable that is supposed to be at "ground" potential is bonded directly to this plate as it passes through. Every conductor that is not supposed to be at "ground" potential is bonded to the plate via an appropriate suppressor device. (A book could be written on that subject alone.) Then the plate is connected to your single point ground by a heavy low inductance strap conductor. Now any large potential difference that tries to express itself across cables connected to various cabinets in your shack will find itself shorted out at the ground window.

Note carefully that every cable must pass through the ground window plate on its way in or out of your shack. That includes power, telco, CATV (if present), and any network wiring as well as the usual antenna feeders, rotator control leads, etc. If only one wire bypasses the ground window, the protection it offers is lost. Don't run extension cords to power outlets that don't pass through the ground window. It can cost you everything you own in a strike, including your life.

Now since you've taken great pains to do this protective grounding system right, you'll find that it makes an excellent general purpose RF grounding system as well. This is not to say that you'll generally need a general purpose RF ground for the shack if you've done your homework on antenna feeds, Faraday shielding, and the like, but you'll have one anyway. And if you've done the job right (which requires attention to a level of detail I haven't fully addressed here), your station will be able to work even during the worst thunderstorms, and even during direct strikes, without damage or interruption. Proper grounding is a specialized, but well understood, part of the protective process that radio and television stations, commercial and military two way, and amateur radio stations should understand and apply.

HAM RADIO SAVES SHOOTING VICTIM

Amateur radio is credited with saving the life of a shooting victim. On Monday, September 25th, 40 year old Rory Clark, KD6RKL, of Citrus Heights, California was shot while standing at a bank automatic teller machine. Using his handheld transceiver, he called for help on a local repeater. The repeater owner and operator, Chris Huber, N6ICW, was listening and autopatched Clark directly to the areas 911 emergency response system. Huber then helped Clark in passing information to the "911" operator about his location, condition, and suspects. This assistance, and the ability to contact another ham immediately saved Clark's life.

The story was covered by all three television network affiliate stations. Their stories not only focused on the crime, but also on Clark's ability to call for help with his handheld.

Since then police have arrested two people in connection with the case. Rory Clark is back home and recovering and local hams in his area have set up a fund to assist Rory with his medical and living expenses. If you want to help a deserving ham in time of need you can send your donation to the Rory Clark Donation Fund, in care of the Sanwa Bank, 601 J Street, Sacramento, California 95814. Meanwhile please join with us in wishing Rory Clark, KE6RKL a complete and speedy recovery.

GRANT AWARDED

Dewayne Hendricks, WA8DZP, of Fremont, California has been awarded a \$400,000 National Science Foundation grant to study the use of wireless communication in urban and rural schools in the state of Colorado. The study will seek to determine the usability limits imposed by issues surrounding radio data transfer as related to an educational environment. The end result of this research project is to will produce a widely needed objective analysis of wireless as a general connectivity solution for public education beyond highly controlled, costly, commercial-service or limited environments. There currently is no such source of this data.

Hendricks is a member of the Future Systems Committee of the ARRL. One of the other members of the team is Bob Buass, K6KGS, from Southern California, the holder of the U.S. National Amateur Radio Spread Spectrum STA from the FCC.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Bill Tozler KB0MWF 527-8089

ARRL PHONE CHANGE

The ARRL has new phone numbers as the result of an area code for Newington. The Prefix has changed to 860 but the previous area code, 203, will continue to work until September 1996.

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This space could be yours!!



Remember this is your club's newsletter and with everyone working together we can make it the best yet.

Amateur vanity call sign rules set, but starting date still up in the air

The Federal Communications Commission has released a Memorandum Opinion and Order in its vanity call sign proceeding, PR Docket 93-305. In response to several petitions for reconsideration, several changes have been made to the program as originally adopted. No starting date for the program has been announced.

The FCC adopted, to a limited extent, a change proposed by the ARRL and others that would have limited the selection of vanity call signs, in most cases, to the call area corresponding to the address of the applicant. (The ARRL argued that it would be unfair for a licensee in one region to usurp a call sign in another region, particularly to persons living in Puerto Rico, Alaska, Hawaii, and certain US possessions.)

The FCC said that although in its original report and order it has considered prohibiting applicants from requesting call signs that are assignable to stations outside the call sign region where they live, they decided not to "impose this limitation" because it would restrict the applicant's choice of vanity call signs to 10% or less of the call signs assignable to a particular station.

The FCC also said that "such a limitation could easily be circumvented by using a mailing address in another call sign region."

However, the FCC did limit requests for call signs corresponding to Alaska, the Caribbean insular areas, and Hawaii and the Pacific insular areas to licensees whose mailing address is in the corresponding state, commonwealth or island. Thus, applicants in the 48 states will be allowed to request a call sign from any of the ten call sign regions.

"We still believe that it is unnecessary to impose a rigid correlation between the licensee's mailing address, license class, and call sign," the FCC said.

The FCC did agree with suggestions that an amateur seeking the call sign of a deceased, close relative, should hold an equal or higher class amateur license to that corresponding to the group of the call sign being sought. The FCC said that the two-year waiting period following the death during which the call sign is not available would allow close relatives to upgrade their license class, if necessary.

The FCC also decided that priority should be given to established clubs for obtaining the call sign of a deceased club member. To that end, the Commission established a new "gate," Gate 1A, that will follow Gate 1 in priority. By this method, the call sign of a deceased amateur will be available first to a close relative, then to a club. In order to be eligible, clubs will have to have held a station

license on or before March 24, 1995 (the date of the FCC's Report and Order in Docket 93-305).

The new FCC Part 97 rules become effective November 17, 1995, but the FCC has not announced a starting date for the program. The new FCC Form 610-V for vanity call sign applications is not yet available. The opening of Gate 1 will be announced by FCC public notice.

The FCC's original report and order was adopted December 23, 1994. More information on the vanity call sign program was in QST for March 1995 (page 98); April (page 41); and May (page 95). New rules set

Here is how the new FCC rules will read:

97.19 Application for a vanity call sign.

(d) The vanity call sign requested by an applicant must be selected from the group of call signs corresponding to the same or lower class of operator license held by the applicant as designed in the sequential call sign system.

(4) A call sign designated under the sequential call sign system for Alaska, Hawaii, Caribbean Insular Areas, and Pacific Insular areas will be assigned only to a primary or club station whose licensee's mailing address is in the corresponding state, commonwealth, or island. This limitation does not apply to an applicant for the call sign as the spouse, child, grandchild, stepchild, parent, grandparent, stepparent, brother, sister, stepbrother, stepsister, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, or in-law, of the former holder now deceased.

97.21 Application for a modified or renewed license.

(ii) When the license shows a call sign selected by the vanity call sign system, the application must be filed as specified in Section 97.19(b). When the application has been received at the proper address specified in the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau Fee Filing Guide prior to the license expiration date, the license operating authority is continued until final disposition of the application.

(The full text of this FCC Memorandum Opinion and Order can be downloaded from the ARRL BBS and other electronic sites.)

Fox Hunt!

Join in the fun the second Sunday of each month at 4:00 p.m. two miles east of Castle Rock. Meet at the Lutheran Church parking lot 1.5 miles south of Hwy. 86 on Ridge Road. Talk-in: 147.555 MHz simplex.

OPEL FOLLOW-UP

If you've ever wondered just how helpful amateur radio can be during disasters, look no further than the Gulf coast. With Hurricane Opal pounding northwest Florida and southern Alabama, amateur radio operators found their services and resources in great demand.

On 75 meters, hurricane disaster nets are in full operation. Some amateurs are on the air around the clock while Opal slams ashore near Pensacola October 4th. Emergency communications on HF are just one of the services amateur radio operators provide. Central Alabama's VHF and UHF amateur frequencies are full of storm related traffic. People fleeing the hurricane arrived in Birmingham to stay in Red Cross shelters. Boyd Bradshaw, KB4GDN, was part of a communications effort starting at 7:30 Wednesday morning October 4th, an effort in part to help the Red Cross:

"They had approximately 12 shelters set up in the Birmingham area. We provided some communications to shelters that did not have telephones due to flooding the previous day. The net stayed in session until 2:00 AM the next morning. We were constantly taking damage reports and relaying those to the AMA Office and also relaying the position, status and what to expect to in the weather because most people were without power." Bradshaw

Power was a problem for the Red Cross at its hurricane staging center just south of Birmingham. The center is located in a shopping mall and has no backup power. When the lights went out, so did the phone system. Amateur radio came to the rescue with members of the Birmingham Amateur Radio Club bringing in the Club's 10-thousand watt generator. The generator provided power until commercial electricity could be restored. Radio amateurs worked closely with Alabama emergency management agencies, forwarding damage information and even a report of a tornado which the National Weather Service was not aware of.

Hurricane Opal brings a lesson about emergency preparedness to amateur radio. Opal caused one of the worst power outages the state of Alabama has ever seen. In fact, nearly a quarter of a million customers were without power three days after the hurricane hit. Many of the hams relaying emergency messages were able to do so only because they had emergency power.

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ARRL Bulletin 96 FCC OKs closings plan

The FCC has approved a field office restructuring plan that it says will improve operations and save money. The plan, submitted to the Commissioners by FCC Chairman Reed Hundt on August 17, would automate the FCC's network of airwave monitoring stations and reduce the number of field offices and field personnel in the Compliance and Information Bureau (CIB).

The plan also will improve public information services by establishing a new toll-free national call center, the FCC said. The Commission's field enforcement activities would be maintained at current levels.

The plan would close nine separate attended high frequency monitoring stations, and three additional monitoring sites within FCC field offices. Technological advances permit the replacement of these monitoring stations with a national automated monitoring network by the summer of 1996, the FCC said, and "overall, monitoring capacities will be enhanced." One facility in Laurel/Columbia, Maryland, will remain as the network central station.

The new FCC Call Center would, for the first time, enable the public anywhere in the United States to call one toll-free number to reach the FCC for information or to report complaints. The Center will handle this function more efficiently, and with greater convenience to the public, than is now possible in the dispersed field offices, the FCC said.

The FCC said that, under the plan, authorized staffing in the CIB will decrease by about one-third by the beginning of FY 1997. The CIB plan will require an investment of 5 to 7 million dollars in equipment and personnel in fiscal years 1996 and 1997 and the Commission estimates it would save more than 8 million (in current dollars) annually thereafter.

Hundt said, "The CIB restructuring plan will enable us to enforce the rules that govern the nation's airwaves better and cheaper. We will also be able to provide information services to the public better and cheaper."

As is required for all major FCC reorganizations, the CIB restructuring plan must be reviewed by the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. At the same time, the FCC will begin required negotiations with the union that represents FCC employees.

More information is in November 1995 QST, page 92.

OEM Parts Inc.

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